

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

October 23, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.
Department of Administration

DRAFT MINUTES

I. ATTENDANCE

1. Members Present

Mr. Everett Stuart, Vice Chair
Mr. Lloyd Albert
Ms. Sue Barker
Mr. Michael Bliss

Mr. Michael Cassidy
Mr. Albert Dahlberg
Ms. Eliza Lawson
Mr. George Monaghan
Mr. Daniel Porter
Mr. Tom Queenan

Mr. Barry Schiller
Ms. Pam Sherrill

RI Association of Railroad Passengers
AAA Southern New England
RI Bicycle Coalition
Representing Mrs. Dinalyn Spears,
Narragansett Indian Tribe
Public Member
Public Member
RI Department of Health
RI Consulting Engineers (RICE)
RI Airport Corporation
Representing Ms. Meredith Brady RI
Department of Transportation
RI Sierra Club
RI Chapter, APA

2. Members Absent

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair
Mr. Dan Boudouin
Mr. Alan Brodd
Mr. Richard Crenca
Dr. Judith Drew
Mr. David Everett
Mr. Ronald Gagnon
Ms. Lillian Picchione
Mr. Michael Walker
Mr. Michael Wood

Public Member
Providence Foundation
Town of Woonsocket
City of Warwick
Governor's Commission on Disabilities
City of Providence
RI Department of Environmental Management
RI Public Transit Authority
RI Commerce Corporation
Town of Burrillville / RI League of Cities and
Towns

3. Statewide Planning Staff Present

Mr. Benjamin Jacobs
Mrs. Karen Scott
Mr. Chris Witt

Principal Research Technician
Assistant Chief
Principal Planner

4. Guests Present

Mr. Corey Bobba

Federal Highway Administration

Ms. Lori Frizette
Ms. Eugenia Marks

Ms. Hyun-A Park
Mr. John Preiss
Mr. Don Rhodes
Mr. Steven Smith
Mr. Kevin Viveiros

RI Department of Transportation
Audubon Society; Coalition of Transportation
Choices
Gordon Proctor Associates
RI Department of Transportation
RIPTA Riders Alliance
Narragansett Indian Tribe
Pare Corporation

II. Agenda Items

1. Call to Order

Mr. Everett Stuart Called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

2. Approval of August 28, 2014 Minutes – *for action*

As the meeting did not yet have a quorum, all action items were deferred until such time as a quorum was filled.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

No comments made at this time.

4. MAP-21 Educational Series – Asset Management

- **RIDOT Staff Presentation – *for information***

Ms. Karen Scott gave a short introduction of the topic of Asset Management, noting that one of the main themes of MAP-21 is finding ways to do more with less, and that moving to an Asset Management and Performance Management based TIP plays a central role in this process. Ms. Scott then introduced Ms. Hyun -A Parks, a consultant working with RIDOT on their Asset Management Plan, to give the presentation, MAP-21 Educational Series – Asset Management, as distributed with the Committee's packets as shown in (attachment 1). Highlights of those items in which the Transportation Advisory Committee engaged in discussion are as follows:

Mr. Loyd Albert noted that, according to the data presented, pavement was in significantly better condition than bridges, and that the gap between desired condition and existing condition was expected to grow over the next ten years despite additional funding. Mr. Loyd Albert then asked why that was.

Mr. John Preiss, Chief of the Asset Management section of RIDOT, replied that it is the result of not having enough funding for preventative maintenance, causing bridges that are in good and fair condition now to fall into the poor category over the next several years. Also, funding goes farther in pavement repair than in bridge repair. Mr. John Preiss also noted that RIDOT began a program of pavement preservation about ten years ago, while no similar program was enacted for bridges.

Mr. Corey Bobba, FHWA Program Development Team Leader of the Rhode Island Division, noted that in MAP-21 congress defined minimum levels of bridge service, including the threshold of only 10%

structural deficiency by bridge deck area, or face a loss of flexibility in spending choices until the threshold is reached.

Ms. Lori Frizette noted that some of the other thresholds seen in the presentation had been set by RIDOT, and Ms. Hyun-A Park noted that many of the rules detailing how MAP-21 will be applied have not yet come out.

Mr. Barry Schiller observed that achieving the Asset Management goals for roads would imply the use of half the state's highway budget each year, with a similarly large allocation of funds for the bridges, while these high goals have not come with additional funding from Congress. Mr. Barry Schiller opined that the State should complain of this situation to Congress. Mr. Barry Schiller added that better data on and enforcement of truck weight violations might help with the situation, as overweight trucks exponentially accelerate wear and tear on bridges.

Ms. Lori Frizette of RIDOT's Office of Performance Management, responded that while no data was available as yet, her office was engaged in an effort to understand other state's best practices on weight limit registration and enforcement, and impacts of over-weight loads on Rhode Island's roads.

Mr. Albert Dahlberg asked if MAP-21 included provisions for early intervention if it looked like a state was not going to meet its goals.

Mr. Corey Bobba replied that though many of the rules are still being created, for bridges, the clock does not start ticking until 2016. He further noted that he hoped that preemptive intervention would not happen, that FHWA would be eager to work with the state on its plans for coming into compliance with the goals, but that if the state did not meet its goals there would likely be some requirements for assessment and reporting.

Mr. Lloyd Albert asked if making up the funding shortfall needed to achieve the federal goals would fall on the states. Mr. Corey Bobba said that this was definitely a possibility. Mr. Corey Bobba went on to note that many states have historically spent far more of their own money on maintaining their transportation network, and as Rhode Island has historically spent far less of its own money on maintenance, there is correspondingly more money needed for repairs.

Mr. Lloyd Albert asked if the local law makers were aware of the situation, and Mr. Corey Bobba replied that some were aware, particularly within the State Planning Council.

Mr. Michael Cassidy asked how Rhode Island's rather sizable gap between current system and set goals compares with other states. Mr. John Preiss replied that the last statistic he remembered showed that four states were similar to Rhode Island but most are just below attainment of the set goals, while eight to ten states have surpassed the goals. Mr. Corey Bobba noted that there are several things that could be done to help, including showing the presented data to law makers and decision makers around the state. Mr. Corey Bobba went on to note that other states have undertaken several other strategies to improve their asset conditions, including more funding from the legislature and public/private partnerships. Some states have set rules indicating that not all roads are equal, and that higher class roads are expected to attain a higher level of performance, and thus are given priority for maintenance funding, over lower class roads. Ms. Hyun-A Park noted that the most important thing to be done is finding a way to disseminate the presented information to a wider audience. Mr. Lloyd Albert noted

that, since the state has ended bonding for transportation maintenance costs, discussions on the topic in the legislature have become significantly more productive.

Mr. Barry Schiller continued by pointing out that other states are able to fund their transportation system because they have toll roads, while Rhode Island has resisted tolls, meaning the money granted by the legislature in the most recent session only served to fill the gap left by the loss of the Sakonnet Bridge tolls.

Mr. Barry Schiller asked if there was an equivalent set of rules for protecting transit investment. Ms. Hyun-A Park replied that there is a MAP-21 rule requiring the development of transit asset management, but that it was as yet less clear what form it would take.

Return to deferred item: 2. Approval of August 28, 2014 Minutes – *for action*

Mr. Everett Stuart noted that, as several more members had entered since the beginning of the presentation, a quorum was now present, allowing review and approval of the August 28, 2014 minutes.

Mr. Barry Schiller noted that in the previous minutes, Mr. Don Rhodes' name had been misspelt as Jon Rhodes.

Mr. Michael Bliss noted that he had been present at the previous meeting, but had not been listed as such.

Mr. John Preiss noted that Governor Chafee's name had been misspelled.

Mr. Tom Queenan made a motion to accept the minutes with the above corrections. It was seconded by Mr. Cassidy. It was accepted unanimously.

5. Staff Report

Mr. Witt made the following report.

State Freight Plan: A consultant has been selected and will hopefully be hired shortly, at which the process of identifying stakeholders will begin. If anyone is interested in regional freight issues there is a conference at the Volpe center on 11/6/2014.

Functional Classification: Edits discussed in the September meeting are nearing completion.

Sad News: Mr. Barry Schiller has announced his resignation from the TAC. Mr. Chris Witt noted that Mr. Barry Schiller has been an intelligent, forceful, and articulate advocate for transit, bike, and pedestrian issues on the TAC since the beginning of the organization, and that his presence at the meetings will be greatly missed. Mr. Barry Schiller thanked Mr. Chris Witt for his kind words, noted that it has been his honor and privilege to serve on the TAC, that he has met many interesting and informative people as both colleagues and staff, and that though he will no longer be on the committee, he is likely to show up from time to time to make comments as a member of the public.

6. Additional Public Comment

Ms. Eugenia Marks, who represents the Audubon Society and the Coalition for Transportation Choices asked whether the truck weight stations had been closed, whether they were under the jurisdiction of RIDOT, and whether closing them was not penny-wise and pound foolish. Ms. Eugenia Marks also noted that a bridge had been eliminated on Rt. 10, and asked if bridge elimination or shortening was not a way to help in attainment of MAP-21 goals. Ms. Eugenia Marks continued by asking about the role of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in MAP-21, which seems to be highly vehicle-oriented. Ms. Eugenia Marks suggested that upgrading pedestrian and bike infrastructure should be a key part of the next TIP. Ms. Eugenia Marks noted that these modes are not only beneficial to the health and safety of children attempting to go to school, but that being physically active has been shown to have significant intellectual benefits for students.

7. Other Business – *for discussion*

Mr. Michael Cassidy noted that Rick Greenwood of the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission had passed away from cancer. Mr. Michael Cassidy noted that Mr. Greenwood was a consummate professional and well known to those in the historic preservation community.

Mr. Barry Schiller noted that the Sierra Club is one of many supporters of ballot Question 6 on the election on November 4, 2014, and encouraged the committee members to support it as well as it would give needed aid to RIPTA, connecting the RIPTA system to the commuter rail system, allowing Rhode Island to better take advantage of its position on the Northeast Corridor, and reap various economic and environmental benefits.

9. Adjournment

Mr. Everett Stuart asked for a motion of adjournment. The motion was made by Mr. Albert and seconded by Mr. Cassidy. The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 pm.